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and

applying a patterned discontinuous liquid layer of adhesive tackifier resin in a predetermined amount to at least one side of the layer of reinforcing fibers to form a tacky ply, wherein a portion of the predetermined amount of the tackifier resin being forced into a number of the fibers;
assembling a plurality of the plies to form a preform, the predetermined amount of adhesive tackifier resin being sufficient to maintain the assembled plies in a shape of the preform;
placing the preform in a mold; then
injecting a second resin in liquid form into the mold to form a continuous matrix of resin between and around the plies of the preform; and
curing the preform to form a near net shape article.

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19. (Added) The method of claim 1 further comprising forcing a predetermined quantity of tackifier resin into a number of fibers as the tackifier resin is applied.

REMARKS

This response is filed in response to the Office Action dated October 21, 2002.

Claims 1-9, 11-14 and 18 are pending in this application.

Upon entry of this response, claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14 and 18-19 will be pending in this Application.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 10-12, 14 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102, and rejected claims 4-9 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103.

The present invention is directed to a method of preparing a preform for a RTM molding process comprising the steps of forming a layer of reinforcing fibers; applying a patterned discontinuous **liquid** layer of a tackifier resin to at least one side of the layer of reinforcing fibers, wherein a predetermined quantity of the tackifier resin **being forced into a number of the fibers**; and curing the tackifier resin. There is antecedent basis for the liquid layer in both a preferred embodiment containing "liquid tackifier resin, drawn from a supply 14," (see page 6, lines 25-26) and an alternate embodiment "comprising at least one spray nozzle (not shown) positioned to